

Why Christians Don't Study Their Bibles, Part 1 - Romans 3:1-4 – May 29th, 2011

- As we now begin a new chapter, Paul will now begin to sort of round a corner, as it were, by both asking, and answering, several questions.
- Paul is taking this approach in order to strip them of everything they have held on to, as being true, so as to replace it with what's really true.
- In their self perceived righteousness and their privileged circumcision, they saw themselves as being a true Jew, when in fact they were not.

Jon Courson - "... in chapter 1, Paul addresses the unrighteous heathen. In chapter 2, he deals with the self-righteous hypocrite. And here in chapter 3, he'll speak to the super-righteous Hebrew. - - "Creation around them condemns the unrighteous," Paul declared in chapter 1. "Conscience within them condemns the self-righteous," he proclaimed in chapter 2. And in chapter 3, we will hear him say that the commandments given to them condemn the super-righteous."

- That's why, and how, Paul will accomplish this. He will use the commandments of God, as the Word of God to condemn them in this condition.
- Were the beloved Apostle not do this in this way they would be left to being deceived in what they've believed would guarantee their salvation.
- As God's chosen people, they had erroneously fancied themselves as being super-righteous so now Paul has to dismantle that with the Word.

- It's for this reason this teaching will be part one of a series I've chosen a rather provocative title for; "Why Christians Don't Read Their Bibles."
- I am keenly aware this title may stir you up maybe even work you up by virtue of what it infers, which is that Christians don't read their Bibles.
- There are a number of reasons for this, some of which the Apostle Paul will uncover for us now, as he answers this for those in Rome then.

1. It's uncomfortable for the comfortable (Verses 1-2)

- v1 After having confronted the Jews about being real Jews inwardly, Paul rhetorically asks what advantage or value there is in circumcision.
- v2 He answers this question by saying there's much in every way, the first of which is that the Jews were entrusted with the very Word of God.
- This is interesting for a number of reasons not the least of which is that now they can no longer be comfortable and secure as Jews outwardly.

- Paul has succeeded in making them very uncomfortable in, that which they had become quite comfortable in, namely, circumcision outwardly.
- He has to get them from Point A to Point B by showing them the fallacy of point A and in so doing discomfort them enough to consider Point B.
- Point A represents the Jew in the circumcision outwardly, and Point B represents the truly saved Jew in the circumcision of the heart inwardly.

- This would explain why Paul says what he says in the way in which he says it. He must shake their Jewish confidence to the core, outwardly.
- It's only then that they're unable to remain comfortable in their circumcision guaranteeing their salvation, as it's merely fleshly, only externally.
- Now they're ready for that which is instead, spiritual and internal, that being the double edged surgical knife of God's Word circumcising them.

- Here's a question, by way of application to us as professing Christians; "On which rack am I hanging the hat of my assurance that I'm saved?"
- Are you comfortable with your church attendance, water baptism, or outward profession of faith as being enough to guarantee your salvation?
- It's not! I'll go as far as suggesting that this should make you uncomfortable, if you've become too comfortable with this brand of Christianity.

- So, what then is the value in attending church or professing to be a Christian? There's much in every way, first and foremost the Word of God.
- When I get into God's Word, God's Word gets into me, and changes me from the inside out, by cutting away my flesh circumcising my heart.
- This is why it is so absolutely vital to study the Word of God, and allow God to make me uncomfortable by cutting between my soul and spirit.

Hebrews 4:12 NIV For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

- Absent the uncomfortable cutting and judging of the thoughts and attitudes in and of my heart, I'm abandoned and destined to perish in hell.
- In the Devilish deception of comfortable Christianity studying God's Word is dismissed, thus the discomfort of God's Word studying me is disallowed.
- Would to God that we would be numbered amongst those who've submitted and surrendered to the sharpness of God's double-edged sword.

2. It's faithful for the faithless (Verses 3-4)

- v3 Paul rhetorically asks another question, this time it's as it relates to those not having faith, or lacking faith, nullifying the faithfulness of God.
- v4 He again answers the question saying; "not at all!" Then he tells them to let God be true and every man a liar and quotes David in Psalms.

Psalms 51:4 NIV Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge.

- I believe the reason that Paul uses David as an example is because in spite of his sin and unfaithful faithlessness, God was still faithful to him.
- In other words, God's faithfulness to David, was not contingent on David's faithfulness to God, in that, His Word to David remained faithful.
- This seemingly explains the comparing of their faithless carrying out of God's Word, to David's faithless carrying out of what God entrusted to him.

William Newell - "That nation was entrusted with the oracles of God—inestimable, eternal advantage! despite their unfaithfulness. Every writer of the Bible is, we believe from this, an Israelite. Jewish faithlessness could not annul God's faithfulness in carrying out those oracles. God must be found true, though every man be false (to whatever God entrusts to him). Paul instances David's most humble confession and ascription of righteousness to God, after David's own great sin had shown David himself faithless to the royal covenant Jehovah had committed to him."

- Here's the take away from all of this and it's yet another reason why it's so critical for us as believers in Jesus Christ to study the Word of God:
- First, if we don't know the Word of God, we won't know this truth about God. Second, if I don't know the Word of God, I can't know the God of the Word.
- When I don't know that God, true to His Word, is faithful to me, even when I am faithless to Him, it's devastating to my relationship with Him.

- Here's why; I will wrongly adopt and embrace a "when I - then God" Christianity, that believes this notion of God only being faithful, when I am.
- This brand of the Christian faith not only have it wrong, they have it backwards thinking when we do for God, then He will do something for us.
- That's not how it works, it's the other way around. When I'm the recipient of God's goodness and faithfulness I respond in kind by faith, to Him.